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"MONSIEUR HENRI"

BY

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

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De la Rochejaquelein

"MONSIEUR HENRI"

A FOOT-NOTE TO FRENCH HISTORY

BY LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

101980

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TO

MADAME MARIE-ANGE BONDROIT
R.S.C.J.

When you were first an exile, and at Elmhurst, I was a child. Six studious years we had together, many games, a tiff or two, much silent love. It is because I do not forget any of them, and because it may stand as a little token of an honorable and lifelong debt, that to you, my dear old friend, without asking your leave, I dedicate this book.

"I have looked narrowly into this war of La Vendée, full as it is of scenes and faces; I have thought of it by day, and dreamed of it by night. It is not cold, commonplace war, waged for ambition and policy, nor for commercial advantage; it is a war deep-rooted in the soil and in the conscience of man; a war all for family and fatherland, in the antique impassioned way; a Homeric war, inspiring dread and admiration, pity and love. . . . Everything in it calls for the palette and the lyre."—A Republican officer, quoted by Abbé Deniau, *Histoire de la Guerre de la Vendée.*

"And mark you, undemonstrative men would have spoiled the situation. The finest action is the better for a piece of purple."—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, in *The English Admirals.*

De la Rochejaquelein

PREFACE.

SO little concerning the French provincial struggle of the eighteenth century has found an echo in our language, that the British Museum and the Bodleian Library have not three original references between them to add to the local archives (most of them, alas! still confused and uncatalogued), of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Madame de La Rochejaquelein's beautiful *Mémoires* still serve as the basis for whatever may be said on the subject; and where I have differed from her by a hair, it has not been without reluctance, and the comparison of many oracles.

I do not plead for pardon in treating

an all-but-hallowed theme in a rather high-handed fashion, since every grain here has been painfully sifted and weighed, and the material, if not the proportioning of it, is true as truth. But in so treating it, I bore in mind that excision is the best safeguard against decay, that time throws away as rag and bobtail the political specifications thought to be precious, and that we must at once, and in the nobler sense, romanticize such dry facts as we mean shall live.

It is always the character of the man which vitalizes the event; what did or did not happen is, ultimately, of minor importance beside the spectacle of a strong soul. A background may be blurred for the sake of a single figure. I tried, therefore, to paint a portrait, willing to abide by the hard saying of Northcote: "If a portrait have force, it will do for history."

To the Rev. Walter Elliott, editor of

The Catholic World, who allows me thus to incorporate and remodel a sketch first contributed to its pages; to Monsieur le Curé and Monsieur le Vicaire of Saint-Aubin-de-Baubigné, who, for the sake of the immortal Red Handkerchief unknown to English literature, brightened my frosty travels in the old Bocage; to Madame la Comtesse de Chabot of Boissière; to Mademoiselle de Chabot, Henri's young kinswoman and annalist, whose ardent researches have verified many of the data I give, and to Monsieur de Chabot, also, who drew for his sister's soldierly book the admirable chart now kindly lent me for transmarine use, I return, this late, my faithful and ever affectionate thanks. L. I. G.

LONDON, 1891.

"MONSIEUR HENRI":

A FOOT-NOTE TO FRENCH HISTORY.

BEFORE a crowd of excited farmers, a young Frenchman, blond, enthusiastic, delicately-nurtured, made once this singular oration: "Friends! if my father were here, you would have confidence. As for me, I am only a boy, but I will prove that I deserve to lead you. When I advance, do you follow me; when I flinch, cut me down; when I fall, avenge me!" Then amid the cheers and tears of peasants, he sat in the great court-yard of his father's abandoned house, and munched with them their coarse brown loaves. It was the

first slight sign of his consecration to a cause. He had spoken famous words, hardly to be matched in history; words which have travelled far and wide, and proclaimed his spirit where his name is utterly unknown. Yesterday he was a carpet-knight; now, like "gallant Murray" in the song,

> "His gude sword he hath drawn it,
> And hath flung the sheath awa'."

There was no retrogression. Henri du Vergier de La Rochejaquelein, twenty years old, a little indolent hitherto, an athlete, a critic of horses and hounds, was suddenly shaken out of his velvet privacy into the rude lap of the Revolution.

He was born in the village of Saint Aubin de Baubigné, near Châtillon-sur-Sèvre, in the broad-moated, wood-surrounded feudal castle of La Durbellière, on the thirtieth of August, 1772. He

came of fighting stock. Among the ancestors of his name there were Crusaders, two warriors slain under Francis I. at Pavia, and a dear brother-in-arms of Henry of Navarre, who was wounded beside him on the battle-field of Arques.- Henri's father, the Marquis Henri-Louis-Auguste, died of the opening of an old scar in 1802, after able service in San Domingo, where he was defeated, with his English allies, by the blacks and the forces of Spain; his wife, a proprietress there, described in the parish books at home as "the high and powerful lady Constance-Lucie-Bonne de Caumont Dade," was destined to survive her son also, but not long. They were the parents of two other sons and of four daughters, of all of whom it is perfect eulogy to say that they were alike. Henri, the second child and eldest boy, was intended for the military profession: while the supreme political storm was brewing he was com-

pleting his studies at Sorèze. This famous school in Lower Languedoc was just then, under the benignant rule of Dom Despaulx, in its prime. In the great plain under the shadow of Pepin's Tower, the Benedictines could marshal their four hundred boys, in blue uniforms faced with red. Henri was probably something less than an enthusiast in botany and dancing (for all the arts had excellent show at Sorèze), but gentle as he was, he had no disrelish for the novitiate of war. He must have apprehended, even at the still college where, long after, the radical Republican, Père Lacordaire, set his bust to smile down upon the bent heads of the study hall, what strange transatlantic winds were already blowing over France. He looked forward always to a campaign, to spurs and sabres, and some mighty Jericho to assail. Courage he had as a birthright; the splendid animal non-

chalance in face of danger, and, later, in a measure almost as ample, the fortitude of soul which "endures and is patient." He went directly from school to Landrécy in 1785, joining the garrison as sub-lieutenant, his first commission being in the Royal Polish regiment, of which his father was then colonel. The marquis, a person of worth and fortune, had every reason to be pleased with his pretty cavalryman of thirteen, who had to get along as he could, without public favors, and who was treated with complimentary strictness.

Henri became one of the constitutional guard at Versailles, which had replaced the household body-guard of Louis XVI., and six years later, when this was disbanded, he remained in Paris, by order of the King. His lodgings were in the Rue Jacob. On Friday, the terrible tenth of August, 1792, he was in the Tuileries, and narrowly escaped with his life; his

companion, Charles D'Autichamp, crossing the bridge over the Seine, killed several men in his own defence. It is likely that Henri forced his way on a run through the great alley of the Champs Elysées, or found passage at the Queen's garden-gate, where most who ventured were struck down; for he was not with those who went with Choiseul, sword in hand, on that ever-dramatic day, to join their master under the protection of the Assembly. Louis-Marie de Salgues, the young Marquis of Lescure, a cousin of the La Rochejaqueleins, reached Tours safely with his wife, along a road marshalled with forty thousand hostile troops; he owed his escape to the romantic gratitude of Thomassin, Parisian commissary of police, whose pupil he had been. Haggard, wearied, wrought to the pitch of anxiety, they fled unawares into the heart of revolt and disturbance. La Durbellière was deserted;

the family of La Rochejaquelein had emigrated, during the preceding December, to Germany; the parish had gone over to the will of the majority. Lescure, sheltered at his château of Clisson, in Boismé, Poitou, sent for his homeless kinsman. Thither, evading a series of perils, Henri went, stepping in among a strange huddled group of royalists: men of resources, like Bernard de Marigny, with his large joyousness of nature; men like the giddy, whimpering old Chevalier de La Cassaigne, who got the whole house into trouble by his officiousness, and whose name is often indulgently replaced by a blank; aristocrats, abbesses, notaries, old tutors, servants, distant relatives, and proscribed children, keeping vigil over the dying hopes of conservative France. Few rumors reached them of the fighting in Anjou; they ventured out into the roads but seldom, as the doors were jealously watched. They

were of one heart and mind, undergoing agonies of suspense, and anon cheering one another with fireside tales, with indoor games and music. Marigny, the kind giant of a cousin, with his maskings and recitations, his mimicry of divers ages, conditions, and dialects, kept them alive with laughter. But Henri was the true centre of interest; all relied upon him, quiet and reserved as he was; from first to last he somehow made a moral brightness in the sombre lapses of those days. He was no courtier; "he had lived," says the woman then Lescure's bride, "but little in the world." Here, through her, we have the earliest glimpse of his tall and comely figure, of his wheaten-yellow hair, his healthful color, his animated eyes, "his contour English rather than French."

Like a thunder-clap came the news of the King's death. It had been provided that word should be sent to Clisson of

any impending rescue. Not a hand worth counting had been raised to save him. Lescure and La Rochejaquelein looked at each other in profound grief and dismay; and among the twenty-five men in the château capable of bearing arms, the spark of desperate merriment flickered out. So they remained for months, in the midst of threats growing from day to day. Madame de Lescure was learning to ride, as an initiation into the possible life before her, and sat trembling upon the saddle, while her husband and Henri walked on either side over the greensward, supporting her, and comforting her tears. Henri began to be more moody and preoccupied, saying little. He traversed the country alone, often facing and surmounting danger with his consummate physical skill, sometimes hiding, or galloping madly to the woods. On one occasion gendarmes made a descent on Clisson, and carried off his fa-

vorite horse. They told Lescure that "the son of Monsieur de La Rochejaquelein was much more sharply suspected" than he was. "I do not see why," Lescure replied, with his habitual directness; "we are relatives and fast friends; our opinions are quite the same."

Citizens were summoned to the defence of Bressuire. Lescure had been for four years back commandant of his parish of Boismé. Hourly he expected his orders to march against his insurgent neighbors: there seemed no way out of it. The men were holding a council of debate, determined, at least, to make a passive resistance when, early in April, the name of La Rochejaquelein was called to be drawn for the militia. On the track of this announcement followed a secret message, brought by a young peasant named Morin, from Henri's unmarried aunt, living in retirement some miles away. Chollet had been taken; the peo-

ple had arisen; there were wild hopes that the royalist faction might get the upperhand. The young peasant, eager and breathless, fixed his glance upon Henri. He spoke persuasively, with a fervor that seemed to thrill his whole body. "Sir, will you draw to-morrow for the militia, when your farmers are about to fight rather than be drafted? Come with us! The whole country-side looks to you; it will obey you." "God wills it," cried Peter the Hermit. He willed that God should will it, at any rate, and all Christendom took him at his word. The peasant boy had some spell beside eloquence, for Henri's thinking was over. "Tell them that I will come," he answered. That night, accompanied by one servant, a guide, and the tremulous Chevalier, afraid to stand his chances at Clisson, provided with a brace of pistols and carrying a stick, Henri mounted his horse and waved

farewell. There were protestations, arguments, women's prayers and tears; but he silently tightened his belt upon his pistols, and threw himself, at parting, into Lescure's arms. "Then first came the eagle-look into his eyes" (says the gentle historian of La Vendée), "which never left them after."

Machecould, the Herbiers, and Chantonnay had already been seized by the insurgents, when Henri, racing across country to evade the Blues, reached the little army on the morrow of a nearly fatal victory at Chemillé, whose fruits had to be abandoned for lack of ammunition. He turned about and made another painful journey to Mademoiselle Anne-Henriette de La Rochejaquelein; and passed Easter there with her in the roomy house of charity at Saint Aubin, Le Rabot, which she had built in 1785; then, with a few young men, he hurried to the rebels' quarters at Tiffanges,

whither they had withdrawn. Stofflet, Bonchamp, D'Elbée, even Cathelineau, were disheartened; they had now but two pounds of powder; the shabby regiments were disbanding. Henri went back, brooding and restive, to Saint Aubin. It seemed as if opportunity, after all, had failed him. But the peasants found him, calling upon him as "Monsieur Henri!" a plain name which is historic now, and promising that in the course of a day a force of ten thousand men should join him. He urged them to gather at once by night, armed only, alas! with their cudgels, spits, hay-forks, scythes, and spades. They came in droves to the castle at Saint Aubin from Nueil, Rorthais, Echaubrognes, the Cerqueux, Saint Clémentin, Voultegon, Somloire, Etusson, Izernay. Quétineau's trained division, three thousand strong, was before them. They had but two hundred muskets and sixty pounds of blasting powder,

which Henri had discovered in a mason's cellar. At dawn he took command, with the alarum on his lips. His gayety had come back; he had found his post. What he had to say fired itself in an epigram. He was a little pale, but very earnest, and his beautiful presence was another thousand men. He was only a boy, he said; but if he flinched they might, at least, cut him down; if he fell in battle, they would, at best, avenge him. And they stormed up together against the Aubiers on the seventeenth of April, 1793, as if in the first bustling act of a bright drama.

THIS side-show of the great Revolution was a magnificent spectacle, and unique in the world's annals. The seat of war, *Vendée militaire*, may be described roughly as being bounded on the north by the Loire from Saumur to the sea; on the west by the Atlantic; on the south by a line drawn from Sables d'Olonne across to Parthenay; and on the east by another line from Parthenay up again to Saumur. It was then comprised in some square leagues of old Anjou, Poitou, and Nantes; it is now divided into the four modern departments of Loire-Inférieure, Maine-et-Loire, Deux-Sèvres, and Vendée. The name Vendée, at first, indeed, minor and

local, rose and spread after the affair at Challans on the twelfth of March, until it became representative of the people and their cause. And Vendée, once mentioned, means two things: the Marais, or low sea-coast district, a great meadow honey-combed with canals from the island of Bouin to Saint-Hilairie-de-Rie; and the inland Bocage, or thicket, in its own way quite as inaccessible. The latter, the centre of agitation, was settled by rugged, simple, honorable folk. It was glossy with woods of golden furze and pollard oaks, and broken everywhere with little hollows and little streams. It was a rough and arid place; it had few roads, and these were clayey and difficult; it was full of rocky pastures, hedge-rows, and trenches; dull in color, crabbed in outline, niggardly of distance. It had not a mountain nor any considerable landmark save the Hill of Larks. In the narrow flats it was all but impos-

sible for the enemy to form; and utterly impossible for one detachment to communicate with another by signals. The puzzling Bocage was a glorious vantage-ground, however, for its own sons. The race which mastered it had great agility and nerve: Cæsar had called them invincible. They were not of a volatile humor, as were their compatriots in northern France; and yet they moved habitually in the very gravity and temperance of cheerfulness. The patriarchal life survived among them: the noble divided the proceeds of the land with his farmers; and he was his own steward, attending personally to business, and having for his tenants those with whom he had played as a boy. The ladies' carriages were drawn by bullocks. On fête-days the wives and daughters of the hall danced with the peasants. After the Sunday services, among his devout flock

the good *curé* read aloud the place of meeting for the week's hunts. There were no feuds; a scandal was unheard of; a lawsuit was a twenty years' wonder. The keys of the jail had taken to chronic rust. The shut-in Bocage had seen the beginnings of the national upheaval with but faint concern. Its own clergy were poor, its own gentry magnanimous; its liberties were entire; it had no great public abuses calling for reform. And through the outlying districts things were much the same. It was impossible, as Jeffrey wrote soon after in the *Quarterly*, to "revolutionize" a people so circumstanced. Innocent and happy as they were, it may be said of them that they had no history till the insurrection. It broke out in March of 1793, it was over in July of 1795; and those on its soil cannot speak of it yet without a throb of feeling.

It was in the main, a religious war;

one of the few since St. Louis' in the thirteenth century, which has not disgraced the name; and the latest, indeed, known to general history. But it has been affirmed too often that the nobles and priests, active here as elsewhere for the losing cause, had roused the masses to revolt. M. Berthre de Bourniseaux, of Thouars, a Republican, says earnestly, that defensive war was produced by three causes, with none of which the influence of churchmen and kingsmen, as such, had anything to do. First, by the execrable tyranny of the Jacobins in worrying an intensely conservative section, which, in the proper Jacobinical jargon, was not "ripe" for the Revolution; second, by the foolish persistent persecution of their old faith in behalf of the goddess Reason — a thing borne long in silence and bewilderment, until the smouldering opposition sprang into

the full stature of a blaze; third, by the forced levy of three hundred thousand men. On the twenty-first of January, 1791, Louis, after his usual hesitation, signed the decree authorizing the ejection of those vicars and curates who would not uphold the new civil constitution of the clergy. It may be believed that this stroke of national polity fell heavily in mid-France, where "priest-craft" had never figured as a word in any possible dictionary, and where the Roman obedience had been as perfectly established as the solar system in the popular mind. Says Lamartine: "The Revolution, until then exclusively political, became schism in the eyes of a portion of the clergy and the faithful. Among the bishops and priests, some took the civil oath, which was the guarantee of their lives; others refused to take it, or, having taken it, retracted. This gave rise to trouble in many a

mind, to agitation of conscience, and to division in the temple. The great majority of parishes had now two ministers, the one a constitutional parson, salaried and protected by the state, the other refractory, refusing the oath, bereft of his income, driven from his sanctuary, and raising his altar in some clandestine chapel or in the open field. These rival upholders of the same worship excommunicated each other, one in the name of the Government, one in the name of the Pope and the Church. . . . The case was not actually, as it stood, persecution or civil war, but it was the sure prelude to both. . . . When war burst out, the Revolution had degenerated." It was not until August that the report of the uprising in the provinces, and the full sense of its significance, were accredited at Paris. Simultaneously the air thickened with fierce rumors from Austria and Spain, and Dumouriez's last

watch-lights sputtered out upon the frontiers. While the attention of Europe was fixed for a moment on larger matters, the disbanding of ecclesiastics and the enrolling of conscripts engendered their natural sequence in ignored La Vendée, and the placid farm-country sprang forth prodigious, like a fireside spectre, menacing the fortunes of the house with a bloody hand.

Let it be remembered, despite Carlyle's random arrow at "simple people blown into flame and fury by theological and seignorial bellows," that the nobles and the clergy, whatever may have been their desire, were too well informed to pit a forlorn corner of France against the united realm. Here, as in Paris, and for rival arguments exactly as apposite, the Revolution was a matter belonging to "the man on the street." Against what they knew to be the spirit of rapine and injustice, the people, of themselves, arose.

Their campaign had no intrigue, no pushing; it had absolute purity of intention. More perfectly than even the American civil war, this of La Vendée was fought on a moral principle, and on that solely, from the start. Every advantage possible was on the side of submission; the peasants would have been let alone and forgotten, presently had they been weaker, and wiser. Unable to foresee the majestic trend of events, not having in their own sore memories the germ of a verdict which was to reverse the world, they hit out, in the dark, against the local and the immediate wrong. Ignorant as they were, they were not ignorant of their jeopardized liberties. They opposed iniquitous laws for the sake of their own commune; their argument had premises impregnably sound. If they were mad, it must be added that they were right, too, in the fullest relative senses of earth and heaven. The titled gentry were

compelled to join, in nearly every case, by their vehemence. D'Elbée, Bonchamp, Lescure, La Rochejaquelein, Charette, and many of the minor officers, were drawn from their very firesides, and urged into service. "You are no braver than we, but you know better how to manage," so the frank fellows explained it to the lords. The priests, also, banished from their sad parishes for refusing the irregular oaths proposed by the Assembly, and cast adrift like the hill-side friars of Ireland, long held aloof from sanctioning the redress of arms. Nowhere, at any time, did they march nor combat with their flocks. When their bodies were found upon the field, it was manifest that they had been shot while ministering to the dying. Such, on this point, was the Vendean sensitiveness, and austere regard for the proprieties, that a young subdeacon discovered in the ranks was angrily and summarily dismissed.

Not until the army was at Dol did the pastors ever attempt to "fanaticize" the soldiery by working upon their religious feeling as a means of reviving courage. Nor did the laymen ever waive towards them that which, in Turreau's phrase, was their "blind and incurable attachment." At a sign from some active Levite they actually disbanded during Holy Week of 1793. The Republican squadron, sent to quell the revolt, found the villages in dead quiet, and so returned north; but on Easter Monday the roads were alive again.

Well was the Bocage called, by the earliest of its very few English critics, "the last land of romance in Europe." The quarrel espoused for conscience' sake had a child-like disinterestedness. What the men endured we know; the rewards they meant to ask for their success were these: that religion should be established, free of state interference;

that the Bocage itself should be known as La Vendée, with a distinct administration; that the King should make it a visit, and retain a corps of Vendeans in his guard; and that the white flag should float forever from every steeple, in memory of the war! It is clear that they had little to wish for, and that they had no greed. Nor did they fight for glory, the dearest motive of their race. "There is no glory in civil war," said Bonchamp, in what was, for once, too ascetic a generality. But they were dedicated souls; they bore themselves gently, gayly, without boast or spite; and they long continued to honor the obligations laid on them by the purest cause that ever drew sword. Their blows were struck for the independence of their religion, and only incidentally for the monarchy then identified with it. From the chivalrous conversation between the Marquis of Les-

cure and General Quétineau, then his prisoner, we learn that even Lescure would have rushed to the common defence had the Austrian made good his threat to pollute the soil of France. They failed, we say; yet what they fought for they secured: the liberty of the Church, and the restoration (temporary, as things are in France) of the government of their allegiance. Louis XVIII. was unworthy of their devotion. He was mean enough afterwards to reduce the pension granted by Napoleon himself to Madame de Bonchamp; to suspect the immeasurable loyalty of Madame de Lescure; to refuse admission to the portraits of Stofflet and Cathelineau when opening his gallery of generals at Saint Cloud, because, forsooth, they were but plebeians. In a hundred ways, by delayed recognitions, by temporizing, by denials, and by cringing to alien opinion (things deprecated with energy

by the Abbé Deniau in his valuable work), he broke the faith of a too faithful party. Yet the praise the western subjects hoped for from the little Dauphin of 1793 they won from this man. "I owe my crown to the Vendeans," he said, with the family characteristic of gracious speech.

The peasants, therefore, driven to the wall, rebelled without forethought or plan; a desperate handful against the strength of new France. At remote points, with no concert whatever, hostilities began: on Sunday, March tenth, in Anjou, two days later in Lower Poitou; and months passed ere one knot of insurrectionists heard tidings of the other. With the populace at Maulevrier rose Stofflet, the swarthy game-keeper of the resident lord; Stofflet of the German accent, harsh and hard, big-nosed, unlettered, trusty, a keenly intelligent and masterful disciplinarian. But the note-

worthiest leader was Jacques Cathelineau, "a painstaking, neighborly man," wagoner, and vender of woollens. There had been a disturbance at Saint Florent over the drafting; the Government troops fired; the young recruits charged on their assailants and routed them, pillaging the municipality and burning the papers. Cathelineau of Pin-en-Mauges was kneading bread when he heard of it. "We must begin the war," he murmured. His startled wife echoed his words, wailing: "Begin what war? Who will help you begin the war?" "God," he answered quietly. Putting her aside, he wiped his arms, drew on his coat, and went out instantly to the market-place. That afternoon he attacked two Republican detachments and seized their ammunition, his small force augmenting on the march; in a few days it was one thousand strong, and carried Chollet. Cath-

elineau's three brothers enlisted under his banner; in one short year all four were to be gathered into their stainless graves. He was called "the saint of Anjou," and he deserved it; a man of truth, discretion, dignity, and sweetness, about whom the wounded crept to die.

THOSE born in the purple had all the "tenderness with great spirit" of Plato's elect race. They had the delicacy and high-mindedness of the primitive gentleman. A pleasant instance of the odd and fine retention of amenities in the cannon's mouth, occurred before Nantes, where Stofflet, explosive as usual, found occasion to challenge Bonchamp. "No, sir," said Bonchamp, "God and the King only have the disposal of my life, and our cause would suffer too greviously were it to be deprived of yours." Friendships throve among them. Lescure, La Rochejaquelein, and Beauvolliers were closely attached to one another, as were Marigny

and Perault. Preferments went wholly by natural nerve, intelligence, and a vote of deserts. There was no scheme of promotion to benefit those of gentle blood; the army, formed of a sudden, formed into a genuine democracy. "They never talked 'equality' in La Vendée." But its first generalissimo, acclaimed with universal homage and good-will, was the peasant Cathelineau. No long-descended knight floated his own banner; as the Prince of Talmont had to be reminded at Fougères, the *fleur-de-lys* was sufficient for them all. Perfect confidence reigned. After the retaking of Châtillon, the young Dupérat, in company with three others, mischievously broke open the strong-box in Westermann's carriage; there was presumptive evidence enough that they had taken money from it. A council ensued, and Dupérat, questioned by Lescure, denied that they had done so. His high character was known, and

though the mystery was not cleared up, the proceedings were closed with an apology. Here, at Châtillon, pierced with twelve sabres, fell Beaurepaire, who had joined the "brigands" at eighteen. The Chevalier of Mondyon was a pretty lad of fourteen, a truant from his school. At the battle of Chantonnay the little fellow was placed next to a tall lieutenant, who, under the pretext of a wound, wished to withdraw. "I do not see that you are hurt, sir," said the child; "and, as your departure would discourage the men, I will shoot you through the head if you stir." And as he was quite capable of that Roman justice, the tall lieutenant stayed. De Langerie, two years Mondyon's junior, had his pony killed under him in his first onset. Put at a safe and remote post, but without orders, he reappeared, during the hour, galloping back on a fresh horse to fight for the King. Duchaffault, at eleven, sent back

to his mother, rode into the ranks again at Luçon, to die. Such were the boys of La Vendée.

The Chevalier François-Athenase de Charette was first to lead the rebels in the wild marsh-lands of Lower Poitou. He had been a ship's lieutenant. Despite the known laxity of his private conduct, Charette was a power. In matters of sense and courage he was equal to the best of his extraordinary colleagues, all of whom he was destined to outlive. He was twenty-eight years old when he took command at Machecould. Charles-Melchior Artus, Marquis of Bonchamp, was enrolled at the solemn inauguration of the war. He had seen service in India, and was in his early prime : a scholar, an accomplished tactician, and a man greatly beloved, whose name is yet in benediction. La Ville-Baugé, placed by force among the Blues (so called from the color of their

coats, which under the kings had been white), abandoned them, and joined the insurgents at Thouars. He was a youth of marked steadiness and patience, dear to Lescure and to Henri. Gigot d'Elbée, late of the Dauphin cavalry, was forty years of age, already white-haired, of small and compact build. Possessed of many virtues, he was not a striking nor engaging character; his conceit, fortunately, harmed neither himself nor others. It was he who read sermons to his men, who carried with him the images of his patron saints, and who, above all, talked so much and so well of the wisdom which directs us, that the roguish congregation in camp fastened on him the nickname of "*La Providence.*" For Lescure, as for Cathelineau, the peasants had a veneration. Unselfish, contained and cool, versed admirably in military science, Lescure at twenty-six was a bookish recluse, with a heart all kind-

ness, and a bearing somewhat lofty and austere. Born in 1766, in 1791 he had married his first cousin, Victoire, daughter of the fine mettlesome old Marquis of Donnissan. To this timid girl, who heroically followed her husband through the Vendean crisis (and who herself, years after, was to play a second illustrious role as the wife of Louis de La Rochejaqueleiń), we are beholden for the *Mémoires*, naïve and precious, which supply nearly every main detail of the long struggle, which persuaded out of life the ignorance and prejudice of its traducers, and which serve as the worthiest monument ever raised to the loving army, Catholic and Royal.

N their curious dialect, the Vendeans had a verb, *s'égailler*, *s'éparpiller*, and they lived up to it. It meant scattering and sharp-shooting, every man for himself, in what we Americans might call the historic Lexington style. Each carried his cartridges in his pocket. If any complained of lack of powder, Henri had a pricking answer: "Well, my children, the Blues have plenty of it!" which reversed matters in five minutes. Bred in a hunting country, the King's men were expert shots from boyhood. Farming weapons fixed on handles adorned the marching no-pay volunteers. Such guns as they had were put into the ablest

hands; and wonderful musketeers they made, these hunters of Loroux and the Bocage. They crept behind walls and hedges, not firing, as did the troops of the line, at the height of a man, but aiming individually, and rarely missing, so that throughout an action their loss was but as one to five; they leaped garden terraces, and peered from the angles of strange little foot-paths, making sudden volleys and attacks, the chief usually foremost, the men eager and undrilled; or they ran forward by scores, fronting the hostile cannon, flinging themselves down at every explosion, and so creeping nearer and nearer, until they might grapple with the stupefied cannoneers hand to hand. This was their favorite strategy. More than one town was actually taken by savage wrestling and boxing, without a report of fire-arms at all. They lacked wagons, reserves, luggage; each carried his own rations. They travelled without

a calendar, for that sanctioned by the Republic, and therefore, with Fabre d'Eglantine's pretty fooleries of *Floréal* and *Pluviose*, cashiered, was the only one extant in France.

They had thirty lively drums and no trumpets; when they wanted an inspiring noise they sang a hymn. Sentinels could not be trained; it seems incredible that they should have done for two years without pickets or patrols, except when the officers took turns at a necessary duty. But in this, as in other matters, the strong-minded rustics, who freely entered the ranks, reasoned, objected, fought shy, and were at once the solace and the despair of their commanders. A certain fatal independence was born in their blood. What chance, at any time and however valiant, has the army of momentary concurrence against the army of sworn obedience? Innocent of discipline, they were all but

impossible to direct on an open plain. Every movement was a farce in tactics. A chief exercised his full authority according to the individual esteem in which he was held. This singular code, likely to be subversive of all authority elsewhere, was the only one which proud and willing Vendée could be brought to understand. "Such a general goes such a way," the adjutant would call; "who goes with him?" And the tenants of his own seigneury, the guerilla vassals, would run with a shout after him, forming their lines by some convenient object —a house or a tree. Their Monsieur Henri had a formula borrowed unconsciously from the old war-cry of Gaston de Foix: "He who loves me follows me!" When he flashed down the front on his wonderful white horse, which the cheering peasants had christened the Fallowdeer, thinking nothing else could be so wild, so delicate, so amaz-

ingly swift, parish after parish rallied to him in a little cloud. The fashion of gathering in clans and bands, primitive as it was, had its advantages. Every one stood, in action, next another of his own estate or blood; and La Vendée was notoriously careful of its wounded and slain. Never were men more dependent on the nerve and sagacity of their leaders. A disabled officer dared not budge, or the crazy columns would give way. Lescure, unhorsed at Saumur, would have kept the troops ignorant of his hurt had not the boy Beauvolliers thrown himself upon him with a loud cry of lamentation and started a panic in the ranks. Charette being wounded long after at Dufour, his regiments dispersed like sheep. When Cathelineau of the shining brow fell in sight of his army, there was instant rout. At the recapture of Châtillon many a dissembler, sick and weak, rode forth in

affected vigor, and so forced the splendid issue of the day.

The cavalry bestrode steeds of divers eccentricities, but at the tails of one and all figured the enemy's derided tri-color cockade. Ropes were stirrups to these gallant paladins, and their sabres hung by packthreads. They had small leisure for the conventions of the toilet: their hair and beards looked like Orson's. The officers wore woollen blouses and gaiters, having, like the others, the little red consecrated heart sewed on their coats; they lacked at first any distinguishing dress. Neither they nor the privates received a sou for services; if a man were in want he asked for a disbursement, and, until supplies failed, he got it. Funds flowed into the general reservoir from the pockets of the gentry, and from a source as obvious—the rights of confiscation. The main army averaged twenty thousand men; at a pinch

it could be doubled. Sobriety reigned in the camps, though it was the one considerable virtue to which the good peasants, un-French in most matters, were not blindly addicted. Considering the prohibition against the presence of women, it is surprising to find here and there undetected in the van some spotless amazon like Jeanne Robin, or the revered Renée Bordereau, or Dame de La Rochefoucauld, a cavalry captain, shot upon the Breton coast. Piety was universal. The scythe-bearing soldiery, meeting a wayside cross half-way to the battery, would doff hats and kneel an instant, then charge like fiends on the foe. The parishes sent carts to the road-side, laden with provisions for the passing cohorts. The women, children, and old men knelt in the cornfields, while the din went on afar off, to beseech the Lord of Hosts. At Laval and Chollet, where the sieges closed perforce in one mad

scrimmage in the dark, the Vendeans fired wherever they heard an oath, surer than ever the Cromwellians were before them, that in that direction they could bag none but legitimate game.

The peasants were so many big children; they had no adult comprehension of their momentous concerns, to which they gave themselves by spurts, with perfect disinterestedness, ardor, and zeal. After the first hint that the victory was theirs, they hastened to ring the church-bells, and make bonfires of the papers of the administration—proceedings which, according to Madame de Lescure, afforded them unfailing amusement. They went into action like a black whirlwind, with roundelays or litanies on their lips, and the continuous battle-cry: "The King for us, all the same!" They frolicked about the famous twelve-pounder they had named Marie-Jeanne; they kissed its ornate brazen rim; they buried

its inscriptions of Richelieu's era in flowers and ribbons; they lost it with mopings, and they recaptured it with salvos of joy. "Above all things, boys, we must get Marie-Jeanne back!" cried La Rochejaquelein on a certain occasion. "The best runner among you, that's the man for her!" There was no reason whatever for such special devotion: it was pure fun on all sides. They were never under arms for more than a few consecutive days. The gathering together was a sensational sight. The church-bells clanged for a signal, the windmills gesticulated, horns were blown on the hills; and proprietor, farmer, peasant, with sticks and hunting-guns, came threading the hedges, and running in many a long dark line through the waving crops into the village market-place. The troops were repeatedly dispersing and rallying, giving their chiefs endless worry and chagrin. They fought,

like Spenser's angels, "all for love, and nothing for reward." But they left the ranks when they chose; after a success, rather than after a defeat, they would scatter to their homes like so much thistle-down in the air, and it was hopeless to try to follow up an advantage gained. It was when difficulties were suspended that, in the wisdom of their villageous heads, they hurried off, one to his wife, and one to his farm, and one to his merchandise. No general was baffled and angered oftener by this freak than Henri. The valor of the Vendeans was incomparable, though one might borrow a musical metaphor and add that it swerved too easily from pitch. And it is noteworthy, as by a paradox, that whenever they wavered it was not, at least, through dread of any personal hardship. They were often ragged and hungry, but they did not play truant for that. They soon underwent horrible poverty and distress,

and lacked food and clothes. The picked men of a company long marched in grotesque dominos out of sacked playhouses, in lawyers' gowns, even in furniture-stuffs and draperies. The chivalric De Verteuil was found dead on the field equipped in two petticoats, one about his neck, the other about his waist: as noble armor, perhaps, as officer ever wore. Frequently, when ammunition was in abundance, the unaccountable army was overcome; and as often, without a carabine among six, it swept everything before it. Napoleon was the first to see—all the world sees now—how little was wanted to secure their ultimate triumph; how drill, a few kegs of powder, a few observant, able, cool heads where the exiles were congregated, and the prestige and authority of some royal name, might have built up again, it may be in justice, the ancient fabric surely in justice pulled down.

They had no fair play. "Yet these same men, by bravery and enthusiasm, and by knowledge developed of short experience, conquered a part of France, obtained an honorable peace, and defended their cause with more glory and success than did the leagued allies."

As we get away from the grim ethics of history the æsthetics of it take shape and color, and give us an abstract pleasure from the centres of thought and pain. There is an unspeakable attractiveness, despite all, in the image of these turbulent years—an almost Arabian beguilement, as of something which never need be true. The course of events is like a romantic drama, full of "points," of poses, of electric surprises; the dialogue flows in alexandrines; the crises are settled in the nick of time. The talk is the rhetoric of hearts sincere, but French. The devoted Marquis of Donnissan breaks in upon two duelling

swords: "'What! the Lord Christ pardons his executioners, and a soldier of the Christian army tries to slay his comrade?' At these words they drop their swords and embrace each other!" Or, after the terrible battle of Mans, and not long before her little daughter's birth, Madame de Lescure, hemmed in the choked streets of the city, catches in despair at the hand of a gentle-faced young trooper pushing by: "Sir, have pity on a poor woman who cannot go on. Help me!" Whereupon the young trooper weeps some feverish tears: "What can I do? I am a woman also!" Or that charming impostor, the pseudo-bishop of Agra, stands up before the serried lines, and sheds upon them such prose as Matthew Arnold should praise forever: "*Race antique et fidèle des serviteurs de nos rois, pieux zélateurs du trône et de l'autel, enfants de la Vendée, marchez, combattez, triomphez! C'est Dieu qui vous l'ordonne.*"

THE sportsman Count of La Rochejaquelein had it all his own way at the Aubiers. He took the town, and captured large supplies, and gleefully perched upon the cemetery wall, fired no less than two hundred telling shots. Thence he rode by night to Bonchamp and D'Elbée, and to the weary allies of Anjou, bringing aid and arms; and, as a gift not least, the contagious cheer that was in him. When he had fulfilled his public duty, but not before that, he flew to the rescue of his friends. Scarcely had Henri left Clisson, in the spring, when Lescure and all his family were seized as suspects, and conducted to Bressuire, but forgotten there when

fear caused an evacuation of the borough. Henri himself easily carried it, and burst in upon them at the château, crying that he had freed them. By a comical incon sistency, great numbers of the Republican inhabitants rushed for protection back to Clisson, as soon as Citizen Lescure, walking a free man from Bressuire, had entered the gates. That godly gentleman made bashful Henri kiss every woman among them, to ease their fears of the "monster" whom they believed him to be.

Six victories, due to Henri's restless energy, followed in swift succession. Though his growth, in all things, was steadily towards reasonableness and the golden mean, his chief early characteristic was hare-brained intrepidity; a habit of confronting too near, pursuing too far, "combating with giants," as old Burton says of his warrior, "running first upon a breach, and, as another

Phillipus, riding into the thickest of his enemies." He was wholly without fear, and often, at first, without foresight; and it took many bitter denials and reverses to teach him the pardonableness of deliberation and second thought in others. But while he lived, wherever he went, he was a force. He was of the stuff of Homer's joyous men. His decisive fashion swayed elder and better soldiers. His troops were his for risks such as no general else besought them to run; every day he won their hearts anew by some spurt of daring, some astonishing fooling with death or failure. Many a dragoon was cut down with his sabre; horses were slain under him again and again. It is said of him that he never took a prisoner without offering him a single fight, sword to sword. This laughing audacity of his had no cant in it. It was the metal of which he was made, that which he lived by, the blameless outcome

of himself: a thing to sadden and exasperate his companions, and fill them with foreboding. Pilgrim-shells are quartered upon the arms of his house, "the scallop-shells of quiet," as the poet sings. A more sarcastic advice for the La Rochejaqueleins it would be impossible to conceive!

As the close study of the Vendeans brings to mind the character of the Scotch Highlanders, great at an onset, with not a whit more native knowledge of the common etiquette of war, so Henri himself, in sober simplicity of nature, in the firm thoroughness of all he had to do, even in the agreeable accident of personal beauty, is not unlike a much-maligned man who lived a century before him: John Graham of Claverhouse, the never-to-be-forgotten "deil o' Dundee." Claverhouse had a habit of curling his hair on papers; and one learns, with the same sensation, that Henri had

one of those singular antipathies no effort of will can correct. At Pontorson, while Madame de Lescure was sewing in a room, with a tame black-and-gray squirrel in her lap, he came in, and backed against the door, pale and trembling. The sight of a squirrel, as he said with a laugh, gave him a feeling of invincible terror! His friend asked him to stroke the little creature. He did so, shaking in every limb, and avowing his weakness with great good-humor. He was never much of a talker. Discussions were intolerable to him. If called upon in council, he would speak his mind briefly, overcoming an extreme diffidence; and having done, he withdrew, or worse, fell asleep. No one was more humane at battle's end; but, nevertheless, Henri's element was battle. His Paradise was like the heathen board, where, after the combat and the chase, he might sit at the "red right hand of Odin;" and the masterly

rider looked forward to a life where he might play soldier forever. "When the King" (Louis XVII.) "is on the throne," he confided to his cousin Lescure, "I shall ask for a regiment of hussars, a regiment always on the gallop." It was his whole desire of guerdon.

Lescure had also the Roman devotedness: any morning he stood ready to outdo Curtius and Horatius. In the rout of Moulin-aux-Chèvres he drew the hostile squadrons from the pursuit of the frantic Vendeans by calling their attention to himself and to La Rochejaquelein by name. At Thouars he gained the bridge of Vrine alone, amid a shower of balls. He returned to his dispirited band with exhortations; one emboldened comrade followed him to the second charge. But on the instant Henri arrived with Forestier, to join Lescure and fire the lagging troops, as the celestial armies are fabled to have fought at need

for the old commonwealths. Here, this same day, mounted on the shoulders of a gigantic peasant named Texier, one of the most useful men in the ranks, Henri broke the mouldy coping of the fortress wall, and through the breach hurled stones at the flying Blues. His course henceforward is to be tracked in these flashing incidents, deeds compacted of demonic sense and wit. Pauvert depicts him breaking the tri-color lines outside Argenton merely by whistling through, with two friends in his train, like a blast of wind. At Château-Gontier he seized and bore the colors; there and elsewhere, wherever he moved, bullets ploughed the ground under him, and sent up a puff of dust to his spurs. While his weary infantry slept, he was known to watch for them, in an exposed bivouac, and turn his idleness to account by picking cartridges for his poorer "children" out of the wealthy pockets

of the adjacent slain. He and Stofflet reconnoitred the streets of hostile Châtillon by night, on all fours, the sentinel refraining from challenging the passage of the big dogs they were supposed to be. Observe the tricks of a generalissimo, on whose safety the balance of empire hung! He was a lad; he did not know his value; but what he did know was that nobody could manage these indispensable lesser manœuvres so exquisitely as himself. "*Quel gaillard!*" shouted those who at first held back from this incorrigible, superculpable, adorable, business-like creature of a Henri; "*quel gaillard!*" At the siege of Saumur, at a wavering moment of the assault, he flung his hat into the intrenchments. "Who will fetch that for me?" he cried, as certain of his response as was the great Condé, or Essex before Cadiz in 1596. Of course, with his usual verve, he leaped towards it himself, and

the crowd rushed after him as one. In the same engagement he saved the life of his loyal Ville-Baugé, struck from his stirrups while loading Henri's pieces for him; as at Antrain, during the twenty-two hours' battle, and with a call for much greater adroitness, he saved that of La Roche Saint André.

The central event of this period was the five days' victory at Saumur. By Cathelineau's order a *Te Deum* was sung in the church, the captured flags, rent with balls and black with smoke and blood, dipping to the chancel floor at every sound of the Holy Name. Such a spectacle put them all in an exalted mood. Henri was found at a window, meekly musing over their fortunes: he, the deliverer, who placed elsewhere the primal credit of the deliverance. The garrison here was left to his charge, much to his disrelish. "They make a veteran of me!" he said, ruefully, for the

affairs he loved were going on outside. The inaction of the time told on his men, quite as discerning as himself, and far less dutiful; despite the fifteen sous a day which, as the first Vendean bribe, were offered them to remain, they perceived that there was nothing more to fear, and slipped away to their homes. Soon but nine were left, and with them Henri departed gloomily, carrying his cannon, and at Thouars, since not a cannoneer came back to relieve him, burying it in the river. Luçon, too, was lost. Having got astray during the action, he arrived but in time to cover the retreat. At Martigné, where D'Elbée was in command, and again at Vihiers, while Henri was off recruiting, his name had to be cited constantly to encourage the soldiers, though he was absent from the field.

He stood in a valley path, giving orders, during an obstinate fight at Mar-

tigné-Briand. A ball struck his right hand, shattering the thumb and glancing to the elbow. He did not stir, nor even drop his pistol. "See if my elbow bleeds much," he said to his companion. "No, M'sieu Henri." "Then it is only a broken thumb," he replied, and went on directing the troops. It proved to be an ugly and dangerous wound; it deprived him, during the month of September, of his share of three signal victories won by "the devils in sabots" under Bonchamp at Torfou, Montaigu, and Saint Fulgent. Not long after, before Laval, his arm limp and swollen in a sling, Henri was attacked on a lonely road by a powerful foot-soldier. He seized the fellow by the collar with his left hand, and so managed his horse with his legs that his struggling assailant was unable to draw upon him. A dozen Vendeans ran up, eager to kill the man who menaced their general. He forbade

it, as he was sure to do. But he checkmated his Goliath with his tongue. "Go back to the Republicans," he told him; "say that you were alone with the chief of the brigands, who had but one arm to use and no weapons, and that you could not get the better of him."

In addition to his dark blue great-coat and his wide hat, Henri wore anything which he found available, and chose, for his distinctive mark, red handkerchiefs of immemorial Chollet make about his head and neck, and another about his waist to hold his pistols. It is striking to find him, the soul of conservatism, in the identical dress of the Cordeliers, "the red brothers of Danton," cravatted and girdled in their Paris fashion, and flaunting the *bonnet rouge*. The appropriation of the hated color must have been of malice prepense, as a bit of not illegal bravado, and a slap of exquisite fun at the tailorish pomp and circum-

stance of war. Henri made a mountain guy of himself to some purpose. Among the Blues at Fontenay it quickly became a universal order to fire at the Red Handkerchief. The other leaders were unable to persuade him to doff it. "They know me by that," was his aggravating answer, "and besides, it is so comfortable!" But they adorned themselves quickly with the same insignia, and saved him from the sharp-shooters. Such was the origin of the officers' earliest uniform; and with their flapping boots, their huge swords, and these floating flame-colored gingham plaids, they must indeed have resembled the "brigands" of their enemies' fancy. Henri continued to take pride in his Chollet turban, and was apt to consider a hat, except on festal occasions, as a piece of tautology. Later, after the conference at Fougères, he adopted the white sash, with its famous little black knot.

THOSE officers and civic adherents who encompassed the royal family at Paris, between the tragic forsaking of Versailles and the dawn of the regicide year, were, as well they knew, standing under oak-boughs in a gathering storm. Event was treading on the heels of event; every hour was oracular; it was impossible not to forecast the morrow, and to dread or defy it, as habit might prompt. Through the charged and purple air strange figures were passing: Mirabeau, borne dead to the Pantheon, to be eldest of its sleepers; Lafayette, with brave step and smile of compromise, riding through the blue national guards; the Queen, appearing in white on balconies, calm before mobs,

with her firm fair arm about her little son; Barbaroux and Roland escorting Madame as she goes reluctantly from her happy dream-time in the garret of the dingy Rue Saint Jacques into place and authority; Camille Desmoulins, ever sauntering loose-haired, with a soiled roll of writing, and a sarcasm not unsweet upon his tongue; the Chéniers; Vergniaud; Westermann, with his hard, tenacious intelligence not yet amply employed; and Robespierre, "the last word of the Revolution, which, thus early, no man could read;" regal maskers, flown to the frontiers and snared at Varennes, and marched back to the capital amid din of sabres; couriers arriving with verifications of the butcheries at Avignon, and bishops departing, after a rapturous *Te Deum* in the cathedral, each to his seething diocese; stout foreigners drinking in the Faubourg Saint Honoré, and darkly prognosticating ruin for this whole wild

smithy where so much old iron was being lighted and beaten into new uses; Maillard and his murder-men of the Abbaye, walking yet peaceably, but looming on the horizon like huge dripping spectres of the worst that was to be;—such was the panorama, such the France, all of which Henri de La Rochejaquelein literally saw, and part of which, belying the adage, he was not. He, too, had been at the Café Valois; he, too, had watched on the quays the gaming soldiers his colleagues, and the knowing tri-color demoiselles; and heard through his lonely windows, by night, the mounting chorus of

"Amour sacré de la patrie,
Conduis, soutiens nos bras vengeurs!"

the legacy of immortal song which a Royalist had given to the Republic forever. But these externals had no real hold upon him. He was no searcher of the deep roots nor the forward-stretch-

ing tendrils of circumstance. He went across the lesser Doomsday as a child across the hostile streets of a city, thinking always, but not of the obvious things. What he saw through the medium of his sequestered soul were reeking sedition, experiments blundering and caring not whom they hurt, principles despoiling the world of quiet and gentleness and "the unbought grace of life;" and he moved, indeed, towards Burke's own curious inference, that the Revolution was criminal because it was unmannerly. He took no time to philosophize when the one blameless and disadvantaged Bourbon needed his sword; it was nothing to him that pent-up rights, burst abroad, were about to vindicate themselves terribly and justly in "immolating a generation to make way for an idea," while he saw, far more clearly, his order injured, his religion handicapped, and the old ideals taught him at his

mother's knee swept into the universal dust-heap. There were hundreds of honorable lives like his, impelled by the same hurrying conscientiousness, forming on either side of the great struggle from 1789 to 1792: the men who represented the early beauty of the Revolution, while yet it was a "child of many prayers." No apology (in the primitive nor in the perverted sense of the word) need be made for their opposing courses, so soon to be defined; it is enough if we wise landsmen of posterity know the great current and whither it tends, and that we perceive, near shore, the forceful counter-current pushing backward victoriously, if but for an hour, and recognize that both are one clear water, and that the same Hand suffers them to flow. Henri went home, not to ponder much, but to grieve a little and then to fight: to fight the strength of the equinoctial tide, even as it proved.

With every foot of the Bocage he became acquainted; he travelled it over and over; he was spun like a thread of destiny into and around its level fields and farms; he crossed and re-crossed its fords; he lost and won its towns; he held its fortunes for a year in the hollow of his hand; his grave, like his birth, was in its bosom. It is small wonder that a species of folk-lore, in his own neighborhood, has, in three generations, grown up around him, which makes it a difficult thing to disentangle what is true of him from what might as well be true: for the French are not given, even in their gossip, to incongruities. Every rustic, who, having served under Henri, lived to startle a more prosaic world with his reminiscences, had anecdotes to tell of him really vital and precious; and the travellers who were able to gather them at first hand, like Monsieur Eugène Genoude and Viscount Francis Walsh,

are yet to be envied. It is known from oral report how he would run any risk for a charge of his, were he, in particular, a child or a coward; or how he would deny himself bread while one mouth hungered near him; how he was a fatal apparition, looming bare-headed from the saddle, pistol in hand, to those who encountered him in a charge: for he had a sure aim, and no genteel misgivings as to his present duty. Picked out for the object of many raids, he had the strength of nerve to save himself repeatedly, by blowing out the brains of a dozen. When he achieved an admitted advantage, he seemed to overflow instantly with his native kindness and compassion. His military career was less one of thought and command than of manual killing and sparing: and in that particular he belonged with the ancient world, with Gideon and with Hector. The endless patience which he

brought to bear on his heart-breaking circumstance and his ungovernable mass of men, out-soars praise. Not once, among the contradiction, the disorder, the stupidity which he deplored, was he anything but just. This autumnal sweetness of his character, which he seemed to have inherited in full at Lescure's death, was its first and last distinction. It helped him, at an age when moods alternate with the pendulum, to take prosperity without pride, trials without a plaint. Young in every fibre, he had not a trace of the severity of youth, its raw dominance, its hasty partial will.

As he takes the eye from among the striking figures in Madame de La Rochejaquelein's *Mémoires*, so, alive, he compelled the interest of on-lookers and of commentators who were foes. Jomini, in his *Histoire Critique*, turns to him with insistent admiration. Kléber's reports are filled with notes on his scientific

skill. It was the opinion of Sempré, after the Vendean repulse at Granville and the ensuing movement which almost cancelled it, that "Xenophon himself was not half so clever as this vagabond." And Napoleon, the man whose attribute it was to know men, dictating to General Montholon at Saint Helena, used a significant exclamation: "What might he not have become!" Henri's large close mental grasp, his delighting straightforward talk, his prompt deed, were all of a piece; and they won his great contemporary from the outset. Nor had the latter forgotten, when the crown was upon his head, to invent every means to gain the coveted adherence of Louis de La Rochejaquelein, who was much of the same mould.

Henri, unlike Lescure and Bonchamp, was no scholar: one might guess as much from his handwriting, always too indolent and free. To one book, how-

ever, he clung, and after carrying it about for an interrupted rereading, he would put it under his pillow: this was a Life of Turenne. His age and his country were surfeited with learned and poetic persons; while they were writing things worthy to be read, he, as Sir Walter Scott would put it, was doing things worthy to be written; he was breathing abroad something of the Greece crystalizing silently in André Chénier's brain. Shall we ascribe it to immunity from the giant literature which was the prelude of the Revolution that he was a very simple youth indeed, that he believed in God, and was strict (*"sévère"* is Madame de La Rochejaquelein's word) in matters touching his conscience? "He knew me at Saumur, when I came on with Cathelineau," a peasant told a stranger, "and he spoke to me: 'How well it goes with us!' 'Yes, yes, so it does,' I replied, 'thanks to you, M'sieu Henri!'

'Thanks unto God!' was what he said." His own success, wonderful in the extreme to him, he preferred to charge upon supernatural agencies. When he galloped into the guns, and caught no one admiring him visibly, he took occasion to make the sign of the cross; the bigger the danger, the bigger the gesture, according to tradition. Nothing was mere mechanism with him; he was a scorner of exaggeration. His religiousness was in the current of his blood. It alone kept him to the end an optimist: one able to leap into the chasm beyond, without ever having had a single speculation about it, nor a single dread.

THE autumn of 1793, when the red flag was floating at the altar of the Fatherland, when the tombs at Saint Denis were rifled of their kingly dust, and some hearts were yet aching for the fallen Gironde,—this memorable autumn was marked in the west by the *choc* on the heights about Chollet, and the tragedy of the passage of the Loire. During the first attack D'Elbée and Lescure were borne helpless from the field. The ensuing night a council of war was held, Stofflet and Henri begging for leave to defend the town, and Bonchamp persistently pleading for an expedition across the river, in the hope of obtaining succor

and new strength from the Bretons, and of opening a northern seaport to the expected co-operation of England. While the debate was yet seething, the second clash came, and Bonchamp was struck down. It was a terrific battle: forty thousand peasants against forty-five thousand tried and trained soldiers of the line. "They fought like tigers," brave Kléber wrote to the Convention, "but our lions beat them." Before daybreak on the seventeenth of October, without any order of advance, and against the impassioned efforts of Henri and other generals, panic set in, and the air was rent with a league of cries. Then began the mad rush for the Loire, and an exodus comparable to nothing human but that of the Tartar tribes. The manœuvre, suggested but a little while before as a safeguard, was adopted in complete despair, and the retreat deteriorated into a migration. Countless families emptied

themselves into the rebel camp; a horde of poor creatures, including the entire population of Chollet and the near boroughs, flew to the common centre; women, babes, the aged, the sick, the fearful, hung darkening over the army, like summer insects over a pool. Once it had started, nothing could hold back the onward pressure of such numbers. Four thousand men were detached under Talmont and sent to clear the banks at Saint Florent. A whole people, their homes burning behind them, thrown upon pauperism, inevitable separation, and the rigors of the coming winter, the Republican hosts advancing from all sides to exterminate them; Bonchamp, on whose persuasion the fatal move was undertaken, on whose prudence the others relied, known to be dying; Lescure, who had been wounded at La Tremblaye in the midst of his squadrons, dying also; the bewildered, groaning mul-

titude dropping, like the pallid passengers of the Styx, into the river-boats, and struggling from island to island;—what a spectacle! The great tears of anger and sorrow stood thick in Henri's eyes. When a march could be formed, the foot-soldiery, with the cannon, were placed at the head, and the cavalry and picked men brought up the rear. Between them were the fifty thousand drags, stumbling along in a lunacy of terror, and in a muffled roar bewailing their bitter fate, and calling on Heaven for mercy. The habit of their enemies was invariably to attack the van or the rear:—a mistake which, more than anything else, prorogued the inevitable end.

Cathelineau, the first, and, next to Charette, the ablest commander-in-chief of the Vendeans, having been mortally wounded before the gates of Nantes, D'Elbée, by his skilful policy at Châtillon, had himself appointed to the suc-

cession. It was the work of an obstinate cabal; Bonchamp, by every claim, deserved the election. But after the passage of the Loire, D'Elbée, in the confusion, was not to be found. Lescure, besought, in his bed, to take matters into his own hands, immediately proposed that the officer best-beloved by all divisions of the army, and best-known to them, Henri de La Rochejaquelein, should be nominated to the vacant generalship. "As for me, should I recover," added Lescure, "you know I cannot quarrel with Henri. I shall be his aide-de-camp." The little senate met at Laval. Henri, never willing to push himself forward, dissented hotly. As advocate against his own claims, he made his longest speech. He represented that he had neither age nor experience, that he was merely a fighter, that he had too little practical wisdom, that he was untenacious of his opinions, that he should

never learn how to silence those who opposed him: in vain. After the ensuing vote he was found hidden in a corner, and cried like the child he was, on Lescure's breast, for the unsought honor thrust upon him. He was to have no further guardianship and support from that dearest of his friends. On the road between Ernée and Fougères Lescure died, not before a mighty pang was added to his passing by an oral account of the execution of the Queen. In the room where his body lay Henri said to his widow, "Could my life restore him to you, oh, you might take it!"

The Royalists nearly sank under this second calamity, for Bonchamp, too, had but lately died, on the eighteenth of October. ("The news of these two," cried lively Barrère in the Convention, "is better than any victory!") His remains, which, like Lescure's, were carried for a brief time under the colors, were tempo-

rarily buried at Varades. His only son, Hermenée, became Henri's special care. In all his trouble and preoccupation he was pathetically kind to the child, and had him sleep with him every night. By day Hermenée rode with Henri on the same saddle, or trotted in the rear-guard, beating his toy-drum, haranguing the soldiers with pretty ardor, and remembering each lovingly by name. The poor little fellow, weakened by his hardships, succumbed to the small-pox, in his mother's arms, at Saint Herbelon, before the year was over.

The wretched throng were exiled, as completely as they would have been had they crossed the Pyrenees. Seven months of intense activity, seven months of successful fight, even while they were surrounded like sheep in a pen, had resulted only in this: that no single general, at his allotted post, had been able to beat back the Revolution from La Ven-

dée; that the restoration of the monarchy, the remoter and greater object, was more visionary and hypothetical than ever. They hurried northward feverishly, pursued always by an immense force, subject to continuous cold rains, obliged to leave at every stopping-place the wounded and the sick, the women and babes, to mark their trail and to perish by massacre. Kléber had his keen eye upon Henri: "I do not believe he can hold out long, away from his own country." But Henri proceeded to defeat the garrison at Château-Gontier, to crush L'Échelle's division at Entrammes, and to score a double triumph at Laval. It was at Château-Gontier that the venerable Monsieur de Royrand, who had sustained the war in Lower Poitou from the very beginning, breathed his last. His regiments ceased firing, and mourned aloud. Henri hurried into the midst of them, his own

tears flowing. "Come, come!" he cried; "we will weep and pray for the dear friend to-morrow. Let us avenge him to-day!" Then he swooped like an eagle on the troops of the state, with Royrand's orphans at his heels.

THESE were the days of what the peasants called "the reign of Monsieur Henri." Power and the opportunity of dictatorship, which prove the ruin of much excellence, seemed to awaken in him only fresh virtues. So sound was his temperament, that the less unhampered he became the more intelligently he was able to serve his cause; and his manner of serving, as we know, was not to draw charts in his tent. Incapable of turning his little finger to benefit himself, he was a perennial benefit to all around him. His glad irrepressible gusto leavened the spirits of thousands. Providence, he liked to think, took care of him while he was needed.

Now that he had a community depending upon him, as if he were a patriarch of old, his conduct came to be more and more temperate. For his habitual rashness, criminal under other conditions, he ought not at any time to be blamed. A verse from the most masculine ode in English literature might be borrowed to describe La Rochejaquelein, who,

> ——"like the three-fork'd lightning first
> Breaking the clouds where it was nurst,
> Did thorough his own side
> His fiery way divide."

He must have blazed or burst. And he had exterior warrant. It was of the first importance that the generals should have the confidence of their curiously critical liegemen; and that confidence was to be won in nowise but by the display of pluck, the argument of example. Lescure and Bonchamp, whom none will accuse of recklessness, pursued, on cal-

culation, the same and the only course of constant self-exposure; for to such cruel tests did the foolish philosophers of La Vendée put their worthiest. Can anything be more marvellous than that an army so handicapped by whim and ignorance should have withstood attack at all? One by one its governors and guides were mown like weeds, who, had they been enrolled in other ranks, would have been warded from the remote approach of personal peril.

The only legitimate stricture on Henri's behavior is that he did not compel obedience off the field. It became necessary even for him, who was so secure in the affections of his volunteers, and who had so much influence over them, to shed something besides persuasion on the difficult crowd in his charge. He made no endeavor to employ Stofflet's verbal whips and goads, which never failed to accomplish their object; stern-

ness was not natural to him, and it was an art which he somehow disdained to acquire. The fault, beyond doubt, was the outcome of his extreme youth, and of his habit, even in Paris (and what an orgy of a Paris it was then !), of mingling as little as possible with the social world, the sole school for the development of the defensive faculties. Such a lack, in such a character, was predestined to be righted with advancing years. While the reproach existed it was fully confessed, and it colored all his judgments upon himself: it was entirely just that he should have deprecated, as he did, the major responsibilities urged upon him in the October of 1793. Almost the last words of Louis de Lescure to his cousin were to assure him that if he, Lescure, lived, his chief care would be to help La Rochejaquelein overcome this ill-placed timidity, which belied the true masterfulness within him, and which

made it impossible to curb factional intrigue.

It is to be observed, that throughout the campaign in Brittany, no blunder has ever been imputed to Henri. He guessed at a science to which others had made the painful approximation of study. His own vision was so clear, so free of prejudice, that he saw at once what was to be done. His sagacity, when things were left in his own hands, was simply amazing: for we do not expect sagacity from dare-devils. But he had a mistaken humility which forbade him to apply his great force of will, when the question arose of overruling age and numbers. His fear that he should not know how to silence those who opposed him proved but too accurate. Cathelineau's death closed the first of the three periods of the war, as his own death closed the second; and up to the hour when "the honest and the perfect man"

of Pin-en-Mauges gave back his great spirit, there was no rivalry nor internal strife in his camp. But by the time "the son of Monsieur de La Rochejaquelein" stood up to direct the graybeards of his staff, the general concord about him was by several degrees less angelic. The farther north the army strayed the more irksome became his position, for his steadfast conviction was against the expediency of trying to reach Granville at all. When, after the affair of Château-Gontier, a unique opportunity arose to retrace the march and re-establish headquarters in the Bocage, it went hard indeed with Henri that none would listen to him. Again, at Laval, he would have pushed through Kléber's disorganized forces, towards the safe though smoking labyrinths at home; but, misled by some vague encouraging rumor, the majority clamored to push on. Throughout this unhappy time, when his light

heart was sickening with rebuffs and delays, there came to him a growing prudence and calm. He learned to cover a rout, to reap the full fruit of a victory. Many of the elder subofficers who watched him were touched and comforted, during the hot fourteen hours at Château-Gontier, where he forbore his old impetuous charges, but rode close to his column, clearing up the confusion, hindering the bravest from advancing alone, and holding the disciplined musketeers together; so as to remind more than one of the tradition of Condé, in his invincible youth, at Rocroy.

THE blue sea-horizon showed no sign of an English sail, though the firing was heard at Jersey; there were tidings neither from "*le roi Georges*" nor from the absent princes of France. When the insurgents, driven forth from Granville by flame and sword, started to return, they found the country which they had just conquered reoccupied by their enemies. They had to contest their way back to the Loire-barrier, as if they were breaking virgin ground. At Avranches there was a mutiny, caused by a rather ridiculous suspicion of treason in Talmont and the ambitious Abbé Bernier. At Pontorson, where the streets had been choked with dead for many days,

the army routed the Blues; Forêt, the first brand in the burning at Saint Florent, fell there; no quarter was given nor taken. A tremendous battle followed at Dol. Talmont sustained the siege with superb courage. Not a few of the fighting corps were sinking already from homesickness, exhaustion, and hunger. While there was a single squad to stand by him, Henri fought like a lion; and then, alone and seemingly numb with despair, he turned about, with folded arms, and faced the battery. It was owing wholly to the exhortations of Abbé Doussin of Sainte-Marie-de-Rhé, and to the resolution of the women, that the troops rallied nobly and wrested three successive victories from their foes. Yet again would Henri have struck out as far as Rennes, thence in a straight line south; and yet again he was forced to see the acceptance of a crazy project, whereby the roundabout route of Octo-

ber was to be retraced inch by in
"You deny me in conference; you ab
don me on the field!" he could well s
with something like wrath flushing
young cheek. The highways were c
horrible open grave; the winter weatl
was cruelly cold; desertions set in; fa
ine and pestilence came upon them.
Angers, Henri would fain have quicker
the lagging spirits of his old comrad
the guns having made a small breach
the town-walls, he, with Forestier
Pommeraie-sur-Loire, who was never
from his side, and two others, flu
themselves into it. Not a soul rallied
their defence. A miserable huddl
mass, the army fell back on Baugé, a
now, unable to seize a permanent adv
tage, ran hither and thither, ever aw
from the Loire. At the bridge of
Flèche, Henri, fording the stream w
a small picked body of horsemen, ov
came the garrison by an adroit mo

and there was a flicker of great hope. But the peasants who began the war were weary, weary. Too truly the tide of disaster had set in.

In the city of Mans, at the end of the only road open, were food, warmth, and rest. The exiles ate, drank, and slept; slept, drank, and ate again. It seemed as if nothing could rouse them more. Marceau, Müller, Tilly, and Westermann's light cavalry were closing on them. Prostrate and drunken, the Royalist survivors lay inert as stones. But Henri's frantic energy ("he was like a madman," says Madame de La Rochejaquelein) once more assembled a desperate handful, under himself, Marigny, Forestier, and the Breton, Georges Cadoudal. A bitter and awful fight it was—a scene of din and smoke and blind tumult, surging about the bloody gates by moonlight. Twice Westermann wavered and charged again. Two-thirds of the forlorn rem-

nant of the journeying army laid down their lives. In the deserted town thousands of old men, women, and children were slaughtered, amid jeers and fury and the patter of grape-shot. Exhausted, and with a heart like lead within him, the commander-in-chief spurred to the side of the widowed Marchioness of Lescure, who, seated on horseback, hung at the outskirts of the forces. (Madame de Bonchamp, under the same affectionate protection of La Rochejaquelein and D'Autichamp, had been ordered, with her two little ones, to withdraw). She took his hand solemnly. "I thought you were dead, Henri," she sighed—and her sequence of speech was worthy both of him and of her, "for we are beaten." "Indeed, I wish I were dead," he answered. He knew that La Vendée had had its death-blow before him.

So ended the march into Brittany. No coward Bourbon appeared to lead and

comfort his believers; the emigrant aristocracy, "effeminated by a long peace," and scattered among the European capitals, shrunk from reviving their own fainting cause; the imperfect overtures with Pitt and Dundas, until too late, were of no avail. The Vendeans were forty leagues from home, famished, diseased, betrayed, burdened with a host of the useless and the weak; and let it be written that in this plight they took twelve cities, won seven battles, destroyed more than twenty thousand Republicans, and captured one hundred cannon. It is a wonderful two months' record: a failure such as bemeans most conquests. And while Maine and the Breton country were overrun, when there were so many to nurse and shelter, so many mouths to feed, it is to be noted that no pillage was legalized. La Vendée paid its last penny for what it took, and when that was spent issued notes in the King's name, payable

at a four-and-a-half per cent. interest at the Restoration.

For the last time Henri led a masterly retreat through Craon and Saint Mars, too rapid, alas! for the dying feet of many. The Loire was to be recrossed at Ancenis on the sixteenth of December. The Republican troops were on the farther side and all about; not so much as a raft was to be hired for pawns. Two pleasure-boats were seized on adjacent ponds and carried to the river. Henri, Stofflet, and La Ville-Baugé in one, young De Langerie and eighteen men in the other, succeeded in launching themselves, with the intention of capturing and towing back some hay-laden skiffs on the opposite shore. The current was rapid and strong; the patrols opened fire; a gunboat descended the channel and sank the skiffs; the mournful peasants, separated from their generals, lost the chance of following, and disbanded in

universal disorder and terror. The army Catholic and Royal, driven back on Nort, and relying on Fleuriot as its provisionary commander, saw Henri de La Rochejaquelein no more.

HE fugitives, fortunately, landed in safety, and wandered all day through the fields. The Republic, angered at the strategies that so long held its strength at bay from the footpaths, hedges, and queer monotonous bush-places which had provided shelter to the rebels and pitfalls to its own baffled soldiery, was literally clearing the neighborhood out, and burning east and west down to the very grass. The houses were in ashes; the inhabitants had taken to the woods; the lowing of the homeless cattle filled the wind. Desolation yet more complete, a desolation known to wolves and carrion-crows, was to fall upon La Vendée.

After twenty-four hours, traversing several parishes and meeting no sign of life, Henri and his companions found a lately-deserted barn, and threw themselves on the straw. The farmer stole in from the thicket to tell them that the Blues were on the trail. "We may be murdered, but we must sleep," was the response. They were incapable of resistance. The Blues, probably sent out from Chollet by the tireless Poché-Durocher, came promptly. They were also a small party, apparently greatly fatigued, and they lay down with their guns on the same heap of straw, not two yards away, and departed, unsuspecting, ere dawn. Their poor bedfellows, thankful for their immunity, crept forth and roamed on. They would have perished, had they not, with the strength of despair, attacked a relay, and seized bread and meat. They had news by chance of the last flash of Vendean courage at

Savenay, under Fleuriot and Marigny, when the hostile cannon boomed *Amen* to the long psalm of heroic pain. Out of nearly one hundred thousand who crossed the Loire the season preceding, less than seven thousand remained.

The little party disbanded. Those who accompanied Henri reached Boisvert de Combrand, and passed a melancholy Christmas with Mademoiselle de La Rochejaquelein, still concealed and in solitude. Here Henri, who was not well, fell into the deepest dejection he had ever known, thinking still of Mans and of the friends gone before him, thinking more of the hopeless tomorrow, now that the chartered Terror, a tightening ring of myriad evil faces, led by Carrier and Francastel, was closing in on the wretched west. His aunt, the best stoic of a stoic family, roused him from his lethargy. She would have him leave her, and risk himself once

again. "If thou diest, Henri," she said, with the reticence which, in her, was rich with meaning, "surely thou hast my esteem as well as my regret." This was the sort of godspeed which could not fail to influence him. He went, at this time, to La Durbellière alone, perhaps conscious that it was his solemn farewell look at the woods dear to his infancy. A detachment of Blues dogged him. He heard the hoofs in time to save himself. His neglected arm, causing him much suffering, was still in a sling. Always light-footed and firm of muscle, he swung himself up as best he could to the ruined lintel of the court-yard gate, and dropping inside the wall, without dislodging a stone, he lay flat, and watched his fowlers debate, pass under, and clatter off, without their bird. This opportune reminder of how much he was still sought and feared, determined his immediate action. Noth-

ing but the jaws of the guillotine awaited him if he failed.

He learned that while Stofflet was already bravely combating in the recesses of the Bocage, Charette was advancing towards Maulevrier. Chafing to be separated from the rallying men, Henri and his comrades set out on the twenty-eighth of December, walking all night, to reach the camp. Charette was breakfasting in his tent. He received Henri coldly, nor did he ask him to the table. They had some conversation, and the younger general withdrew to the house of a neighbor for refreshment. When the drums began to beat, Charette crossed over to the spot where Henri was standing. "You will follow me?" he asked. Henri made a foolish and haughty answer: "I am accustomed to be followed!" and turned away. Here was an instance of the jealousy and disunion which had affected the chiefs of the in-

surrection. Though Henri was the legitimate commander of all the forces of the main army, Charette had a rather ignoble precedent in his favor, inasmuch as his little legion of the Marais had never been fused in the main army; and a long despotism, pure enough in its purpose, had made him averse to any compromise. It seems scarcely credible that, from Cathelineau's time onward, Charette had ruled in Lower Poitou his own schismatical twenty thousand, which never crossed the Loire, which never even co-operated with the other forces, save at Nantes, where they were beaten by Beysser, and at Luçon, where they were beaten by Tuncq. Could the two have agreed to march together on the capital, the counter-revolution, Napoleon declared, would have set in nearly twenty years sooner.

The peasants, flocking meanwhile from the environs to join Charette, crowded

about with welcoming shouts of "M'sieu Henri!" before he had so much as spoken. He was pleased, as they were; his eager spirit revived; he left the Chevalier to his own devices in his own county. Assembling the new battalion at Neuvy, he marched all night, and carried a Republican post eight leagues distant. Then began his most indefatigable minor campaign. He attacked remote points to prevent surmise; he dropped down on widely-scattered garrisons; he harassed pickets, captured provisions, convoys, and horses; he intercepted Cordelier's rear-guards on perilous roads. His name was in everybody's mouth at Paris; he spread fresh fear abroad with every success of these wild days. At Salbœuf Castle and in Vezins his astonishing boldness sprang into final play. He was wise in not yet collecting his men, and hazarding a general contest. His troop of eight hundred increasing

daily, he became, by sheer thrust and parry, master of the surrounding country; and at last he prepared to besiege Mortagne and Châtillon. His headquarters were in the forest of Vezins; his house was a hut of boughs. About it he went and came, a familiar figure in disguise, with long fair clustering hair, his arm in a rough sling, a great woollen cap and peasant's blouse for his regimentals, the little symbolic heart worn outside, as of old. He kept his adherents, poor and threadbare like himself, continually under exercise. Tidings came, too, to cheer them all, that in the north the Chouans were aroused.

It was the twenty-eighth of January, 1794. Henri had a skirmish at Nouaillé, and won. After the enemy were routed, he saw, far to the right of his little army, two grenadiers stooping behind a bush. Some who were with him aimed at them. He bade them desist; he wished to

question them. He went forward, alone, with the Vendean formula: "Surrender and be spared!" A voice from his own ranks, either not heard or not heeded, warned him to stop short. He was riding a richly-caparisoned horse which he had seized, and he had been able that morning to resume his general's coat and sash—things which made him conspicuous and proclaimed him aloud; for one of the Blues, recognizing him, with inconceivable celerity rose and fired. Henri had put out his hand, with a sudden sense of danger, to disarm his assailant; but on the instant, and without a cry, he fell from his saddle, dead.

THE legend of Henri de La Rochejaquelein did not end with his life. Says the Count of C———, an emigrant (author of the graphic and erratic pamphlet entitled *Un Séjour de Dix Mois en France*): "It was in a prosperous hour, and shortly after the fortunate expedition of which I have been speaking, that I had the pleasure of joining the Royalist army. On every side I saw tears only, and I heard but sighs: Henri had lately perished on the field of honor." From this anonymous gentleman comes fragmentary testimony on a subject once of some mystery and conjecture. He had embraced, or helped to create, a rumor that

a woman headed the young chief's troops as soon as he had fallen. He declares that, unwilling to survive him, yet burning to avenge him, she flung herself upon the advancing Blues, and so expired. And he lends her, moreover, the soldierly distinction of reposing by her hero henceforward. Now, as the Count of C—— is the only one in the world to print this story, it may be worth while to quote, for the sake of contradicting it, a passage of that cloying racial eloquence which has never the Saxon shame of speaking a little more than it feels: "And thou, O La Rochejaquelein, thou the Rinaldo of the new Crusade, the terror of infidels and the hope of Christians, thou whom nature had dowered with so much worth and so much charm! look down upon the tears of thy brethren-in-arms; listen to the sorrowings of the whole army; see the glorious tomb raised to thy memory; bid thy

spirit hover nigh among the cypresses, to count the trophies which thy victorious comrades hang there day by day, the garlands which thy countrywomen, fair and sad, wreathe there forever; hear the hymns sung for thy sake; watch the young and buoyant legion sworn to perpetuate thy name and to accomplish thy vengeance; read the inscriptions which passers-by grave on the trees in memory of thee; rejoice to know that thy sweet friend sleeps at thy side, wept, cherished, reverenced, less because she was lovely, good, and bright than because she was once thy heart's happiness and thy triumph's pulse and centre; ah! behold and consider all these things at once, and let the palm which is thine in Heaven be set about and made fairer, if that can be, with all the bays won well of old of earth." The soft music of this extract, crossed with appeals to the supermundane vanity of the most modest of

mortals, is a sufficient voucher that with the real La Rochejaquelein it has no commerce whatever. It was indeed true that some martial girl, leading a company during the winter, received her death-blow in the neighborhood of, Trémentines. The nonsense of her being Henri's sweetheart probably owed its origin to the same singular Republican inventiveness which, long after the fight of Vrine which laid Jeanne Robin low, continued to call her Jeanne de Lescure and sister of her commander, who might have wished any sister of his, did such exist, to be as pure and as brave.

There are instances, in the long dealings of eternity with time, when a man is given whose life is an imagination not to be matched in the arts; but such a one is usually spoiled, like Icarus, by the heats of an alien planet: we cannot take him as he is; we must needs relax and refashion him, and make of the abstract

idyll a *sujet théatrique.* Henri de La Rochejaquelein, zigzagging in the teeth of the enemy, doing deeds with his own hands which are not common in salons; Henri, with his slender height, his shy caressing voice and smile, having no tenderer talisman to carry than the sign of the cross, no parting look at anything more responsive than a torn white flag,—such a Henri, jarring with prescriptive ideas, calls for reform. It is ungracious that a chevalier of twenty should have no leisure for a personal romance; and therefore, for his own credit's sake, that he may remain a consistent and comprehensible chevalier, kind gossip makes him the gift of a lady! almost as beautiful there as Briseis by Agamemnon. Nay; more sincere tradition must leave him as he was, with no true-love yet at his side. For many years, under the boughs of Brissonière and Haie Bureau, there was some one, verily, to share the hal-

lowed six feet of ground with Henri; some one sleeping quietly as the child Hermenée in old days, while yet over the two virginal hearts their common doom was hanging: the bride of the irony of this world, the ungrateful miscreant who had slain him.

When the Vendeans, transported with fury, rushed forward and cut the grenadier down, there was in the air the noise of an approaching hostile column. In the utmost distress the detachment at Nouaillé, to whose command Stofflet now succeeded, enjoined it upon a trusty farmer to bury their chief in a hasty grave. They would not have the grenadier parted from him, that his uniform might be a silent defence against profanation and conceal the identity of Henri, who, stripped of his own insignia, had the enemy's cap and cockade drawn over his forehead. Thrice were the two moved from pit to pit in the lonely

neighborhood a mile or two from Cholet, and always by the loyal, secret, and shrewd hands of the farmer Girard.

Madame de Sapinaud de Bois-Huguet says that the Royalists at large supposed Henri to have been seriously hurt only, and carried to a place of safety, up to the treaty of peace signed by Sapinaud and Charette. This allegation alone would confound the ready rhetoric of the Count of C—— and the "glorious tomb" which never existed. Great confusion as to the date of Henri's death is found in all contemporary accounts, caused by the prolonged lack of calendars; and uncertainty of the fact itself bewildered those interested without. Henri's mother knew nothing of her loss until the following summer. Meanwhile Stofflet temporarily carried on energetic operations in his colleague's name. The rumor of the truth reached Paris slowly, and it bred so great a

doubt in Turreau's mind that he wrote Cordelier to secure proof, by discovering and digging up the body. Thanks to the foresight of others, no such indignity befell what was Henri. But how little Turreau recognized the splendid oblique flattery of this order, which, as Crétineau-Joly remarks, was accorded only once before in history, and then by the Romans to Hannibal!

In 1816, twenty-two years after, by the piety of Mademoiselle Louise de La Rochejaquelein, upheld by the most minute and accurate converging testimony of eye-witnesses, the remains of her brother, easily recognizable by the tall frame and the bullet-hole through the head, were officially disinterred, and laid under the altar of Saint Sebastian, in the old church of Saint Peter at Chollet. And within the year, the centre of a solemn and moving spectacle, borne by his former comrades and the returned

exiles of his family, amid the muffled music of the march, the salutation of the Latin liturgy, and the proud rapture of public tears, Henri de La Rochejaquelein was brought home to the parish cemetery of Saint Aubin de Baubigné. He was buried at the right hand of his brother Louis, who, with another Cathelineau and another Charette, had died at his post in June of 1815, just before Waterloo, at the head of the Vendean army raised to oppose the Emperor Napoleon. "Accident," says Genoude very sweetly, "took upon herself the writing of their epitaphs, and sowed in abundance over their dust what is known as the Achilles-flower." "That is more touching to me," adds Madame de Genlis, in a note to the *Mémoires* of Madame de Bonchamp, "than the legendary laurel which sprung from Virgil's grave."

Again, in 1857, all the precious dust in that little tomb was gathered into the

vault of the new church near, where Henri lies with very many of his high-hearted kindred; and with the venerated gentlewoman who was his cousin both by her first marriage and by birth, and who became, after his death, his brother's wife: Victoire de Donnissan, his junior by three months, his dear friend of the camp and the fireside, his survivor of over sixty years. In the still aisle-chapel above them, the rich light of a memorial window slides down on delicate sculptured marbles, through the figures of the dying Maccabees; and around the walls, graven like a triumphal scroll, is the cry of the same Hebrew martyrs that it is far, far better to fall in battle, than to let ruin come upon the things that are holy. The spotless name of La Rochejaquelein must, with the ebb of this century, be withdrawn from among men; but whoso fears for it is not wise. Every villager to-day, passing

the low sepulchral outer door between Le Rabot and the inn, affectionately raises his cap, and, walking in the ways of his fathers, forgets not the prayer, which, as some yet think with Sir Thomas Browne, is "more noble than a history."

THE strength and beauty of the cause vanished with Henri. The war did not end for more than a twelvemonth; fresh recruits carried it on with wonderful persistence and pluck, under Charette, still in the Marais, Stofflet in the interior, and the Chouan leaders in Brittany. But towards the close, itself the disciple of accursed experience, it became merely "a war of ruffians, carried on by treachery," and accomplished in carnage and wrath; its last flutter on Quiberon sands, its last allaying, far gentler than any anticipation of it, from the steady hand of General Hoche.

"So quick bright things come to confusion!"

The Vendean captains were patriots, as is well said in the preface to Mr. George J. Hill's admirable little book, "whose *patria* was not of this world," Cathelineau, with his thirty-six kinsmen, Bonchamp and Lescure, gloriously perished while yet hope was high; D'Elbée, in a sick-chair in his own garden, laden with abuse, and bearing himself gallantly, was shot at Noirmoutiers; Mondyon and other faithful youths "died into life" at Angers, bound in couples like dogs; Stofflet paid the wages of his exceeding loyalty in the same rocky town; Bernard de Marigny was cut off in his prime by the acquiescence of Stofflet, who was under an evil influence, and by the orders of Charette, to the bitter sorrow, afterwards, of the former; Charette himself, having made terms to his advantage in March of 1795, at Nantes, and renewing hostilities for what he thought to be sufficient cause, though offered a thousand pounds and

free passage to England for his good-will, kept up to the last the unequal struggle with Travot, and, closing a career of signal splendor, was taken and put to death, lion-stanch, with a salute to the King upon his lips. As soon as his grave was dug, General Hoche withdrew his forces. The war was finished.

It is the word of homage to be spoken of the Vendeans, that they fought long with honor and with pity, in the face of unnameable brutality and treachery. During the first Royalist occupation of Chollet, when it was for a while Cathelineau's gay and free little capital, full of festivity and transient peace, the public treasury, known to be packed, was not touched. Tributes to facts of this kind are to be gathered from the pages of every hostile or neutral annalist. And Madame de La Rochejaquelein recalled, for the amusement of another generation, her own amusement at Bressuire in 1793,

when the rueful masters of the situation complained to her that they had no money to buy tobacco, it never having occurred to them to seize it in the shops! It is clear that persons who so scrupled to appropriate the goods the gods provided, were not destined easily to become experts in wanton slaughter, which relieved no need of their honest stomachs. The Republicans began their business at once with the master-stroke of homicide, and forecasted the immortal axiom of De Quincey, that when once a man indulges in murder he soon gets to think little of robbing and lying, of drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and even of incivility and procrastination. But in La Vendée they had a breed of misgiving hearts. Marigny, indeed, mild and brotherly towards his own, was as a demon towards his foes; Charette, the very Charette who had put a stop to the cruelties of Souchu at the beginning,

was, with D'Elbée, the first to sanction reprisals. But Cathelineau, Bonchamp, Lescure, La Rochejaquelein and priests innumerable stood then, and stand always, ranged on the side of Christ-like charity.

To any student of the great Revolution not much need be said of the unequal exchange of grim attentions. The Blues outdid themselves on Vendean territory. Arrest, with them, meant an immediate commission to explore the spheres. The burials alive at Clisson, the holocaust at Vezins, the atrocities in the wood of Blanche Couronne, the week-long fusillade at Savenay, Westermann's thousands shot at Angers, Carrier's drowned at Nantes, the hellish policy of Commaire, Crignon, Amey, Dufour—these were the things which crazed the gentler rebels until they, too, learned to throw forgiveness by, as a coin hollow and vile. In May of 1794, Vimeux, then

in command, went to lay their country waste. Only Victor Hugo's pen could fitly portray the results. The Convention desired report of a landscape without a man, without a house, without a tree; in due season they had it, true to the letter. It was Westermann's boast to the Committee of Public Safety that he had crushed the children under the horses' hoofs, and massacred the women, who should bring forth no more "brigands;" that not a prisoner could be laid to his charge, for he had exterminated them; that La Vendée was heaped, like the pyramids, with bodies. At Rennes the children were made to fire upon their parents: it was a novel, awkward, and lengthy proceeding, entirely to the minds of its originators. At Savenay, hundreds were lured under cover by a promise of amnesty, and as they entered, they were shot down. An adjutant was brought to La Rochejaquelein, during the last

days of his life, in whose pocket was an order to repeat this brilliant joke. During that January, also, at Barbastre, fifteen hundred insurgents capitulated, and were cheated in the same way. What wonder if, outside Laval, with horror on horror bruited in their ears, the peasants destroyed a whole battalion of Mayence men who were laying down their arms? But after, marching on Angers from Antrain, they sent to Rennes one hundred and fifty prisoners, with the significant message that this was the sort of vengeance taken by choice for old injuries. It was the work of the kindly incumbent of Sainte-Marie-de-Rhé. On the morning of this release, Monsieur de Hargues, for whom Henri (who had once a hot quarrel with him) interceded passionately, mounted the scaffold. For the bitter deeds of Souchu at Machecould the army did voluntary penance. Until it was practically disorganized, it did

not sin in the same way again. We are aware how pretty a burlesque between nominal captor and captives came off at Bressuire. And in Thouars, Fontenay, and many towns like them, inhabited by Republicans and revolutionists who trembled for their fate, no violence whatever was wreaked.

A truly humorous retaliation was made, at the suggestion of the Marquis of Donnissan, at Fontenay. There were four thousand prisoners, and no forts nor cells to hold them. Should they be loosed they could not be trusted on parole. (What a thing for Frenchmen to know of Frenchmen!) To solve the difficulty their heads were shaved, so that if during the following weeks they again attempted to fight, they might be caught and punished. The wild barbers had infinite entertainment out of this circumstance. La Rochejaquelein's clemency was a proverb. He waived the very show of

superiority, as when, at Bois-Grolleau, he made Tribert keep his proferred sword. As one who had accepted beforehand the painfulest surprises of fate, he heard of the destruction of La Durbellière without a sigh. Precisely the same danger which proved fatal to him, having rehearsed itself before him early in his career, and the pistol having missed fire, the marksman flung himself at his feet, crying out that he could now have his satisfaction. "That is to let thee live," was the Alexander-like reply, made over and over to those who thus fell into his power. He was destined to perish through his belief in the honor of others. The best acknowledgment of the influence which he had upon his headstrong band, was that although they slew, in his absence, the Republican officer who led the first raid upon his homestead, yet, when he was murdered by the hand of one of the two grena-

diers, they spared the man who had not fired, because he had been offered mercy in Henri's last spoken word. The Marigny, who bore to his imminent misfortune the surname of an active Royalist, was so charmed with the spirited behavior of Richard Duplessis, made captive at the siege of Angers, that he sent him back under escort to his own lines. La Rochejaquelein, never to be outdone in a handsome service, instantly freed two dragoons, with their arms, thanking him, and offering him, in the future, an exchange of any two prisoners for his one. "This was the only Republican general," adds Madame de Lescure, "who had been wont to show us any humanity: he was killed that very day." Marceau and Quétineau, both scrupulously fair, deserve to share this mention of Bouin de Marigny. And to Kléber and Hoche, the knightliest of foemen, no acknowledgment would be too great.

Lescure himself was the consummate type of the early Christian: so tolerant, so self-controlling, that to be able to impute one vicious deed to him would be a gratification. "The Saint of Poitou," however, was once known to swear steadily for several minutes. An enemy, in action, having cocked a pistol within a rod of his menaced head, Lescure, fearless and quick, dislodged the barrel with a swing of his sword, and told the astonished invader to go free. The Poitevins behind had a mind of their own on the subject, and presently cut the bold Blue to pieces. When the general learned how he had been obeyed, his rage was something to be remembered. This was the aristocrat who, when his ancestral halls were razed to the ground, would not burn Parthenay, which he had taken, not only lest it should be, on his part, a revenge for Clisson, but lest, being a precaution merely, it should disedify by

having the look of a revenge! And it is a curious instance of the "governance of blood" in his most lovely character, that although he was invariably in the thickest of the fight, his hand inflicted no wilful wound throughout the war, and that to his personal interference no fewer than twenty thousand owed their lives. Again, at the crossing of the Loire, in an hour of unexampled perplexity, between five and six thousand captives were in the hands of the migrating army, and shut in the Benedictine Abbey church, which still tops the crescent-shaped heights of Saint Florent-le-Vieil. There could be no question of transporting them; the simplest expedient was to destroy them. Nor was this proposal made in cold blood, for the Marquis of Bonchamp was dying young from the last of many wounds, "for the sacred cause of the lilies," and his troops were in a frenzy of excitement and grief. Not an officer could be found

to give the revolting order. The men had the guns already pointed at the doors, and the slaughter was about to begin, when Bonchamp, apprised of what was pending, with his last breath commanded, as he had done before at Pallet, that the Blues should be spared. From the house where he lay the echo rolled along the crowd: "Quarter for the prisoners; quarter! It is Bonchamp's order!" They were delivered. With the genuine Gallic sense of the apportioning of things, Bonchamp's gracious valedictory is inscribed upon his tomb, lifting its glorious outlines to-day in the transept of that very church, and bearing, in a free-will offering, the name of the sculptor, David d'Angers, whose father was among the ransomed soldiery. As to the amnesty, the Convention, guided by the advice of Merlin de Thionville, growled over it. "Freemen accept their lives from slaves! 'Tis against the

spirit of the Revolution. . . . Consign the unfortunate affair to oblivion." There was different speech in the Temple. "Capet!" said the brute Simon to the wretched little King, when the news came of the crossing of the Loire, "if the Vendeans deliver you, what will you do first?" "Forgive you!" replied the child.

La Vendée, forbearing wrong, and seeking after righteousness, has no mean martyrology. What people in the modern world so sweetly rival the holy race of whom it is said in the *Pharsalia* that they hurried on their own extermination, and, brimming with life, spilled it as a libation to the gods? But since these others were not pagan, there is a yet more endearing and more becoming word: "*Æterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerari!*"

IT is a brief and moving story, and it is over. Small comment is to be made at any time, on promise cut short, on the burning of Apollo's laurel-bough. La Rochejaquelein of Poitou, with his goodness, genius, health, breeding, wealth, and beauty — who in his day would have measured for him the renown which seemed so nigh and so wide? And the first reward of that fine heart and brain was a wild grave in the grassy trenches with the assassin; no dues, no amends, no appeal, beyond that piteous ending. He was a boy, rash and romantic, as boys are, and so pyrotechnically French that some must smile at him. His chivalry went to the up-

holding of kings; all he did has a sole value of loyalty, and the application of it is open to dispute. But his spirit, disentangled from old circumstances of action, is that which helps humanity towards the dawn, and sets oppressions aside with bad by-gone dreams; a spirit infinitely suggestive and generative, then and now a durable sign of hope.

It is difficult to account for the halo which gathers about such heads, and stays, to make of a sometime aimless intelligence a vision of extreme force and charm to the youth of his own land. Nor ought we try to account for it. Henri de La Rochejacquelein is one with whom statistics and theories have distant dealings. He is a fond incongruity, a compliment to human nature almost as great as it can bear. He has precisely the look, language, and physical radiance of the demigods: we infer how, from his counterparts, the

early myths grew. Wherever there is a liberal air, and discipline, behold, the demigods are again; and the senses no longer boggle at them. They rise often, and repeat one another, preaching affirmation, and inclining us to allow that what Greece and Japan have had, England has, Alaska and the Congo shall have. Stress must be laid upon heroes: they are the universal premise. Like Emerson's stars, they "light the world with their admonishing smile;" they warn us, if we will not adore, at least not to deny that they shine forever.

Among Henri de La Rochejacquelein's peers there were those who would have been men of weight and of mark in any career. But perhaps he, more sensitive and solitary, had no such adaptabilities to bear him out. He was not twenty-two when the dark curtain was rung down upon him. To regret it, is to show small appreciation of the masterly con-

sistency which Fate sometimes allows herself. No spectator of the little drama enacted within the Revolution can forget how dominant, distinct, unrepeated, this artful image of Henri burns itself in upon the memory. To wish him age and a competency were superstition. Mark how, even in her hasty finishing touches, Nature did not bungle with him. She rounds out her white ideal. She leaves us convinced that living a span, and dying in the hurly-burly, he best fulfilled himself. He is placed in an allotted light perfectly kind to him, perfectly soft and clear to the looker-on.

Virtually, what did he amount to? What testimony of him is left? To the man of facts, who asks the questions, the answers are: Nothing and None. There is a laconic apology in the *Spanish Gypsy:*

"The greatest gift the hero leaves his race
Is to have been a hero."

Such a one makes a jest of values; he has the freedom of every city; he need pay no taxes; he cripples criticism; he can do without a character; theology itself will not exact faith and good works from him. This Henri lived with his whole soul. His interest to us now is that he blazed with genuine fire, and played no tricks with his individuality. Among the serious war-worn leaders of the insurrection he stands, a fairy prince, with a bright absurd glamour. Never was anybody more like the fiction of an artist's brain. He is all that children look for in a tale, and he has no moral. He is the embodiment of "*l'inexplicable Vendée.*"

He was made to despatch this world, like an errand or a game. He had no sovereign interests here of his own; rather was he his brother's keeper. A sort of rich unreason shot him past the work, the musing, the sight-seeing for

self, and the pleasant banquets over which men linger. Careless for the making of a name, for the gain of experience, even for the duty of prolonging his usefulness, he chose the first course which he believed honorable, and to which he could give his heart; and so stumbled on death. The war had a thousand sanctions in his eyes. His enlisting was honest and humble. If he flashed into the most unexampled comet-like activity before he had been long apprenticed, it was merely that he warmed with the motion, that he felt sure at last of himself, and so blazoned abroad his content and comprehension of life. He is less flesh and blood than a magnificent quibble for all the philosophies of the cold schools. He represents, in the economy of things, the waste which is thrift, the daring which is prudence, the folly which is wisdom ineffable.